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Letter dated 10 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Australia, Canada and New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We have been following closely, and with profound concern, the evolution of events in Darfur, and in particular the continued suffering of its civilian population. A report by the African Union Ceasefire Commission of an attack on 26 August on two villages by helicopters of the Government of the Sudan has only served to deepen our preoccupations.

In his report to the Security Council on 2 September, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jan Pronk, noted a number of positive developments, which we welcome. However, Mr. Pronk also underlined that in certain critical respects the Government of the Sudan has yet to deliver on a number of key commitments to the international community. In the light of this, he urged that pressure be maintained on the authorities in Khartoum to act in accordance with the Security Council's demands and the undertakings already made by the Government of the Sudan.

We fully agree with the Special Representative in this respect, and we urge the Council, as it continues its deliberations on the crisis in Darfur, not to foreclose any avenue in its efforts to ensure the protection of the people of the region and to stop attacks on civilians, including implementation, if necessary, of the measures to which reference is made in Security Council resolution 1556 (2004) of 30 July 2004.

We urge the Council to put its full support behind the efforts of the African Union, including advocating the deployment, as soon as possible, of a significantly expanded African Union mission.

We urge the Council to reiterate its call on both the Government of the Sudan and the rebel groups in Darfur to take all necessary steps to prevent violence in the region, to engage in the political negotiations led by the African Union in order to bring about a peaceful resolution to this conflict, and to observe the ceasefire agreement signed in N'Djamena on 8 April 2004.

We would also ask the Council to establish clear benchmarks in terms of both actions expected by the Government of the Sudan and specific time lines for their realization, in particular with regard to:

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(a) The disarming of the Janjaweed militias, as called for in Security Council resolution 1556 (2004) and as stipulated in the joint communiqué issued by the Government of the Sudan and the Secretary-General on 3 July 2004;

(b) The identification of those groups over which the Sudanese authorities have influence, as agreed to in the Darfur Plan of Action on 5 August 2004;

(c) The apprehension and, where appropriate, prosecution of those suspected of inciting and carrying out war crimes and crimes against humanity, again as required by Security Council resolution 1556 (2004);

(d) The continued removal of barriers for access by humanitarian and human rights monitors to carry out their work, as committed to in the Darfur Plan of Action.

Finally, we recommend that the Council call upon the Secretary-General to establish, as a matter of urgency, an impartial commission of experts to investigate allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity, in particular the issue of sexual violence, with a view to providing the Secretary-General with its conclusions on the evidence.

Equally important, the Government of the Sudan must be left in no doubt that it is in its fundamental interest to meet the legitimate and reasonable expectations of the international community that it will ensure the protection of its own citizens.

I should be grateful if you could circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) John **Dauth**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Allan **Rock**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Don **MacKay**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of New Zealand
to the United Nations